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Student-staff relationship properly disclosed
by UT baseball manager of operations days after Applewhite incident revealed. **PAGE 2**

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SPORTS

Texas football heads back to the gridiron to begin spring practices. **PAGE 6**

Softball shuts out Houston Baptist 5-0 in 12th straight victory. **PAGE 6**

LIFE&ARTS

West by West Campus music festival begins Friday. The organizers are preparing for unprecented crowds. **PAGE 8**

Science Scene had to ask: If a meteor barrels toward us, how on earth do we stop it? **PAGE 8**

VIEWPOINT

The regents should not have unlimited authority over everything that happens at the University of Texas, certainly, but neither should the Legislature or nor the University administration. **PAGE 4**

TODAY

Refashioning Blackness

The “Refashioning Blackness” conference encourages a conversation about the current political and cultural moment in the Afro-Americas. The event will be all day in the Sid Richardson Hall (SRH), Benson Latin American Collection 2nd floor conference room.

Restoration and Revelation

A focused look on how museums care for centuries-old art entitles “Restoration and Revelation: Conserving the Suida-Manning Collection” will take place from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. at the Blanton Museum of Art; Admission on Thursdays is free for all.

Clothing drive

Donate that one item of clothing you never wear to homeless teenagers at the One Thing Clothing Drive, held by Texas Do Something from 1 to 4 p.m. outside of Jester.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1965

Malcolm X, an African American nationalist and religious leader, is assassinated while addressing his Organization of Afro-American Unity in Washington Heights.



Longhorns snap four-game skid with win over KU. **SPORTS PAGE 6**



COMICS PAGE 9

TEXAN IN-DEPTH

UT may continue history of outsourcing

This is part two of a three-part series on the changing nature of employment at the University of Texas. Next week's installment will be about faculty tenure awards.

By Andrew Messamore

If the University accepts proposals to outsource on-campus dining, parking and housing services, it would be the latest step in a long history of outsourcing at UT stretching back through the

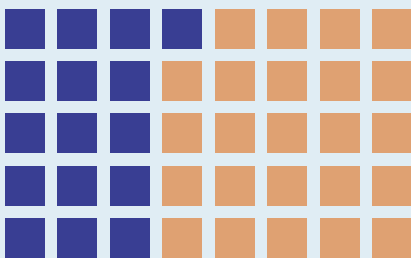
early 1990s.

President William Powers Jr. appointed a 13-member Committee on Business Productivity last year, which spent almost \$1 million in University funds to perform an efficiency study of the University and to identify potential untapped sources

of revenue. The committee claims that by reorganizing the University’s administrative functions, assets and commercialization practices, the University could save \$490 million in the next decade.

Since the report’s delivery last month, Kevin Hegarty, UT’s vice president and chief financial officer, has begun forming a task force to

JOBS *continues on page 3*



EIGHT MILLION OF 20 MILLION SQUARE FEET
of the University of Texas’ cleanable space is maintained by outsourced custodial staff.

Source: Kevin Hegarty, vice president and chief financial officer

CAMPUS

Not the Harlem Shake



Emily Ng | Daily Texan Staff

Junior Anish Nagar demonstrates how to dance a traditional Indian Jhoom at the Recreational Sports Center on Wednesday evening. The dance clinic was hosted by the Indian Cultral Association.

India of old and new demonstrated in acclaimed teams’ choreography

By Alberto Long

The rhythmic sounds of Indian pop music and dance filled the Recreational Sports Center on Wednesday evening as part of the

Indian Cultural Association’s Jhoom dance clinic.

The clinic featured choreography by two nationally ranked dance teams, Texas Mohini and Texas Bhangra. Each team demonstrated its unique style,

which included a Bollywood fusion routine taught by two of four Texas Mohini captains and a traditional bhangra dance taught by the two captains of Texas Bhangra.

“Bollywood refers to the movie industry of India,” organization president Dhruv Goel said. “Texas Mohini tries to promote

the Bollywood culture, while Texas Bhangra is more traditional. They’re very distinct dance styles.”

Rashi Agrawal, co-captain of Texas Mohini, said the Bollywood style is characterized by festive melodies and peppy, upbeat hip movements.

DANCE *continues on page 2*

SYSTEM

Legislature files bill to limit power of regents

By Joshua Fechter

After allegations arose earlier this week that the UT System Board of Regents is micromanaging President William Powers Jr., the Texas Legislature took steps Wednesday to limit regents’ powers over individual institutions within a university system. State Sen. Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo and Senate Higher Education Committee chairman, filed a bill that would limit the reach of university boards of regents into the affairs of individual universities within a system.

Additionally, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said that he and Texas House Speaker Joe Straus will relaunch a joint oversight committee formed in 2011 to examine regents’ proper governance role over individual institutions.

Seliger’s bill would amend state law to say that all duties and responsibilities not specifically granted to university systems or governing boards of those university systems fall under the authority of the individual institutions of that system. Nine other

BILL *continues on page 2*

CAMPUS

Fiscal responsibility taught via jeopardy

By Amanda O’Donnell

A five-student team will represent UT in the first Up to Us competition that challenges nine other major universities to raise awareness of fiscal responsibility through creative campaigning.

Competing schools aim to educate students on the effects of rising federal debt and inspire collective action.

UT’s team leader Hamid Poorsafar has come to understand the importance of political participation through his work for the initiative.

“As a business student you’re taught to focus on getting a job and how much money you’ll make at that job,” said Poorsafar. “Getting people involved in public service is also important, and that kind of work can be really fulfilling.”

Poorsafar is the leader of

UT’s team, which includes economics and mathematics senior Carter Pearson, statistics graduate student Novin Ghaffari, government senior Philip Wiseman and economics, philosophy and Chinese senior Grace Fu.

Wiseman says the competition functions as a reminder of his responsibilities to his generation.

“Previous generations have failed to look out for our future, and nobody else is going to do it for us,” Wiseman said. “We need to take control of the future of our nation, demand answers from our elected leaders, be smart in our borrowing in our own personal lives, understanding that it is in our hands to solve.”

In its campaign, UT’s team will host a jeopardy game Feb. 26 with topics that will

TEAM *continues on page 2*

CAMPUS

‘Refashioning Blackness’ begins



By Barak Bullock

Speakers engaged in renewed conversation over contemporary racism against black people in the Western hemisphere at a lecture series Wednesday.

The event marked the kickoff of the annual Lozano Long Conference, a three day series of speakers, scholars and artists

focused on issues facing people of Latino and African descent.

This year’s conference is a collaboration of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies. Other sponsors include the School of Social Work, the Office of Graduate Studies and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin

American Collection.

According to Paloma Diaz, senior program coordinator at the Long Institute, the annual conference has had a history of tackling political, economic and social issues relevant to Latinos for the past six years.

But 2013’s conference, entitled “Refashioning Blackness: Contesting Racism in the Afro-

TALK *continues on page 2*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, senior editor at The Atlantic and author of “The Beautiful Struggle,” speaks at the 2013 Lozano Long Conference on the current political and cultural movement of Afro-Americans.

Debby Garcia
Daily Texan Staff

JOBS

continues from page 1

examine the proposals and look at ways the University could move forward. There are several options on the table, including outsourcing or raising rates on on-campus food, parking and housing services.

The Committee on Business Productivity estimated UT would stand to save \$92.2 million in 10 years should it outsource all of these functions.

Such a move would not be unprecedented, Hegarty said. Unlike Texas A&M University, which outsourced 1,647 maintenance, landscaping and dining service jobs for the first time last year, UT has already integrated significant outsourcing in its maintenance, landscaping and custodial jobs.

“If you look around today, we already have a lot of outsourcing,” Hegarty said. “The people at Wendy’s don’t work for us. Eight million square feet of our 20 million square feet is maintained by independent custodians. A&M has not taken that over time. We had a lot more opportunity, and I think we did it in a very thoughtful way.”

He said his office does not have an estimate of the number of outsourced workers employed on the 40 Acres as of press time.

Outsourced services at UT range from University email accounts managed by Google to food services run by Compass Group USA at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center. Outsourcing does not always mean replacing existing staff and can include the use of contractors to fill new jobs.

Recently, the University outsourced custodial services at the J.J. Pickle Research Campus to SSC Service Solutions. Thirty-five employees were returned to the main campus, while seven employees in managerial positions were laid off.

This restructuring saved \$500,000 in labor costs, which was put in its reserves. Of the seven managerial employees, only one is known to have been rehired at the University, said Steven Kraal, senior associate vice president of the Office of Campus Planning and Facilities Management.

Facilities Services alone outsources 2 million square feet of cleanable space to contracted custodians, which Kraal said allows the University to bring in outside assistance in the event of a sudden event on campus that demands additional assistance.

The University’s relationships with its outsourced services are bound by their contract, Kraal said, meaning outside hires are only one of many factors determining the quality and condition of work done on campus.

“I think that saying outsourcing is totally bad, or outsourcing is totally good is probably thinking too

small,” Kraal said. “I think [the Committee’s proposals] are applied reasonably. The report has given general outlines, and it’s been very clear that there is going to be a lot of engagement.”

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SELF-DIRECT

As UT continues piecemeal outsourcing, the condition of workers affected by contracting is an important question not just for current workers, but also for future ones, said Anne Lewis, a radio-television-film senior lecturer and Texas State Employees Union organizer.

“The workers outsourced don’t really get impacted [because of promises for wages and benefits] but the future workers will not get those state worker jobs,” Lewis said.

But not all employees, including those whose positions face consolidation as the University centralizes administrative functions, will be able to avoid layoffs.

A former employee of the Cockrell School of Engineering, who asked to remain anonymous because he has family employed by UT, said the University consolidated his managerial position before winter break in 2008.

“I had been working for UT for 13 years, and it had been my hope that I could have continued to work with the University or another state institution to preserve the benefits I had accumulated,” said the former employee, who now works for an Austin Community College after three years of unemployment. “All I can say is that the guy they brought in to replace me was younger person, and I can see why it made more sense to go to him because he didn’t have the same payment obligations I had.”

Regarding the report, Martha Hilley, Faculty Council chairwoman and professor of music, said the proposals for bringing University assets closer to “market value” should have included equal emphasis on the competitiveness of faculty salary.

“We’re kind of also below market price of salaries,” Hilley said. “There’s a lot of wisdom in what the committee turned in, and I liked that one of the first things Powers said is that University is not a business. That’s a fear that a lot of faculty have, that the University is just turning into a business.”

Among the country’s 1,251 doctoral-granting institutions, the salaries of UT assistant and full professors rank in the 80th percentile and the salaries of associate professors rank in the 67th percentile, according to a 2012 study by The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Some faculty members are concerned about the impact price increases could have



This UT alumnus’ managerial position was terminated in 2008 after 13 years of service at UT. He said he was the sole breadwinner for his new family of two children and a stay-at-home wife at the time of his layoff. He asked to remain anonymous because his family members are still employed by the University. **Photo by Marisa Vasquez**

REACHING MARKET RATES

UNIVERSITY	ANNUAL COST RANGE	COST FOR 21 MEALS/WEEK	INDEXED COST FOR 21 MEALS/WEEK
UT Austin	\$1,700	\$2,680	\$2,680
University of Arizona	\$2,000 - \$3,000	\$4,225	\$3,634
UT Dallas	\$2,050 - \$3,395	\$4,350	\$3,741
Texas Tech	\$2,945 - \$3,895	\$4,420	\$3,845
Texas A&M	\$1,600 - \$4,400	\$4,865	N/A
Ohio State University	\$3,475 - \$5,300	\$5,300	\$4,823

The weekly cost of meals at UT-owned facilities sits well below peer institutions such as Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University. Even within the UT system, the average cost of meals is under average “market rates.”

Source: Final Report of the Committee on Business Productivity, January 2013

somewhat self-heal or self-direct,” Hegarty said.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUTSOURCING

Over the past few decades, UT has outsourced various functions, ranging from custodial maintenance to email accounts.

In 1990, UT’s Division of Recreational Sports outsourced custodial jobs through Royal Kim Maintenance, which employs between 10 and 12 contractors seasonally at UT. Recently, RecSports also began outsourcing custodial and landscape services as well as cardio equipment repair, employing an additional five to six contractors.

“Because recreational facilities are unique spaces with lots of specialized areas, outsourcing some services was the best choice for us,” RecSports associate director Jennifer Speer said. Speer added that no jobs were lost in this process because the

University did not employ staff in these areas.

In the following year, 1991, the University Union began outsourcing its cafeteria services, bringing in businesses like Taco Bell and Wendy’s to provide concessions.

Texas Athletics started outsourcing labor for dining previously employed by the University at all athletic events in 1994 through Marriott Management Services, which was bought by Sodexo in 1998. As detailed in a report last spring by The Daily Texan, the French-based Sodexo has been accused of numerous worker rights and human rights violations, some in the United States.

Following a 2010 Human Rights Watch report on Sodexo’s alleged labor practices, the company lost 11 contracts with universities and athletic programs in 2011. Sodexo netted \$3 million in profits for Texas Athletics in 2011.

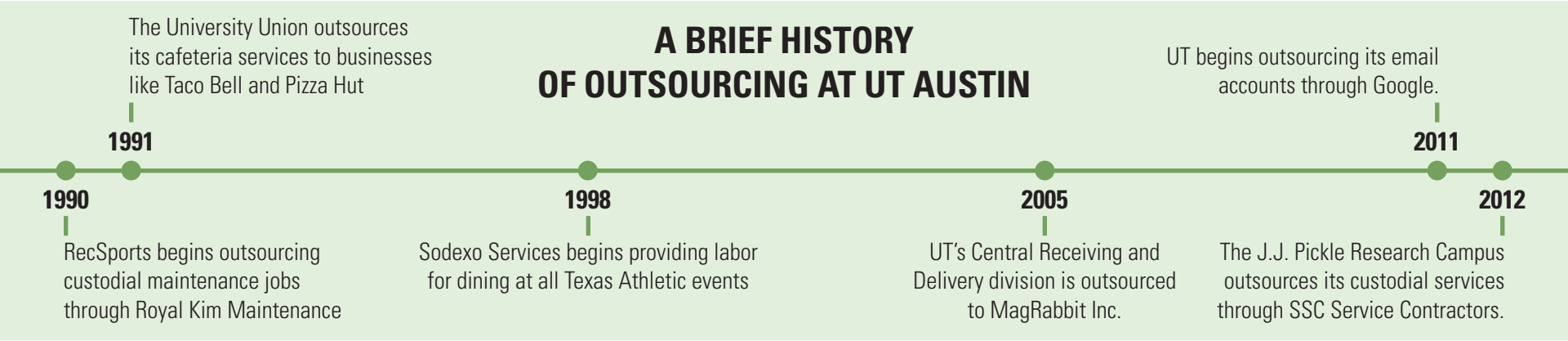
Sodexo was paid \$1,515,472 by UT in fiscal

year 2012-2013, according to state comptroller reports.

In 2005 the University outsourced its Central Receiving and Delivery division to MagRabbit. Central Receiving at that time managed all deliveries on campus from suppliers of office and workplace supplies.

The move was estimated to save the University about \$200,000 a year, and 19 employees then working at MagRabbit were fired but offered seven months time to find a new job. Despite “priority status” as applicants to UT job openings, 13 of the former employees had yet to find new after three months employment, according to articles from The Daily Texan.

There are currently 1,009 staff in the Division of Housing and Food Service, of whom 374 are full-time and eligible for work related benefits. No plans currently exist regarding how these jobs will be affected by the proposals discussed in this article.



SYSTEM

Legislature considers Rio Grande Valley university consolidation bill

By Joshua Fechter

Consolidating UT System institutions in the Rio Grande Valley would greatly benefit the economy of South Texas, UT System officials and Texas lawmakers said Wednesday.

The Texas Legislature is considering passing bills filed in both houses that would combine University of Texas at Brownsville, UT-Pan American in

Edinburg and the Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen into one institution and give that institution access to the Permanent University Fund. The fund, currently assessed at \$1.3 billion for the 2014-15 biennium, allocates money to institutions in the UT and Texas A&M systems.

UT-Brownsville and UT-Pan American are the only schools in the UT System that are not eligible for inclusion in the Permanent

University Fund.

UT-Pan American President Robert Nelsen told the House Higher Education Committee that his institution does not have the space to accommodate students that other universities in the System have. Nelsen said UT-Pan American has 129 gross square feet per student as opposed to 203 at UT-El Paso and 355 at UT-Austin.

“Why do we have so little? Because we’ve never had access to [the Permanent

University Fund],” Nelsen said.

UT-Brownsville and UT-Pan American are not included in the fund because they were not originally established under the UT System.

To be included in the fund, the Legislature must establish a new university within the UT or A&M systems by a two-thirds vote in both chambers.

The Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen is part of the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio,

which means it is already eligible for money from the Permanent University Fund.

Rep. Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville, filed the House version of the bill and said the consolidation of the universities will create 7,000 to 10,000 jobs with an average salary of \$63,000.

“I can’t think of anything I’ve ever offered in my 29 years of the Legislature that will have as much impact as this,” Oliveira said.

Oliveira said he believes

it would take 18 to 24 months to abolish the existing universities and create the new institution if the bill passes.

The UT System Board of Regents approved spending \$100 million of its own funds over 10 years to transform the Regional Academic Health Center into the proposed South Texas School of Medicine, which will be part of the

RGV continues on page 5

VIEWPOINT

Checks and balances on the regents

Prominent members of the Texas Legislature filed measures this week to protect the University of Texas’ autonomy from the UT System Board of Regents. The lawmakers’ actions follow a public outpouring of support in the form of speeches and resolutions in favor of UT President William Powers Jr. on Monday.

Specifically, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst reinstituted a joint committee to determine the proper role of governance structures at Texas public universities — including the Board of Regents’ relationship with UT System universities. Senate Higher Education Committee Chairman Sen. Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, filed SB 15, a bill which would promote transparency and prevent the regents from interfering in University matters not specifically delegated to them.

As set forth by Dewhurst, the revival of the Joint Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence and Transparency will be an explicit effort to monitor the behavior of the board of regents. The committee, originally formed in 2011 following similar controversy over what the regents’ appropriate role should be, has previously taken as its charge to examine “measures to identify and encourage those governing boards and

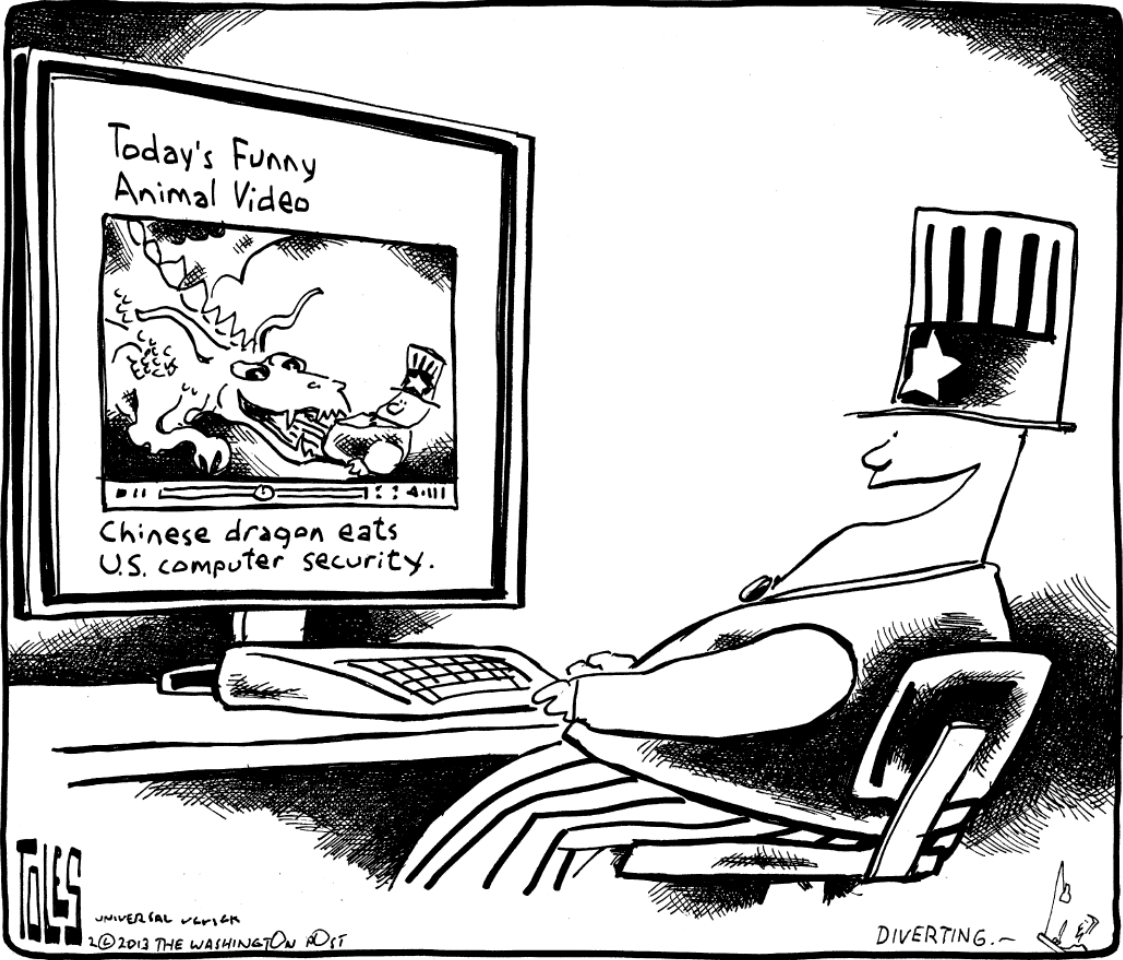
administrators to follow best practices in policy development and implementation,” according to the proclamation that established the committee. In other words, the committee’s renewal sends an unmistakable message about the importance of oversight of the regents. Significantly, the committee could wield real power in achieving that goal this time around, thanks to Seliger’s proposed SB 15.

The bill, which was co-authored by nine other senators, would prohibit appointed regents from “voting on any budgetary or personnel matters related to system administration or institutions of higher education,” without first being confirmed by the Texas Senate and undergoing “training in the areas of budgeting, policy development, ethics and governance.” It also provides that “all duties not specifically prescribed by law to governing boards or system administration are the responsibilities of institutions of higher education.” This last clause, Seliger said in a statement, “is intended to protect institutional autonomy in the same way that we all expect the 10th Amendment to protect state sovereignty from government overreach.”

It’s only sensible that the regents should undergo ethics training and legislative review — after all, University faculty must submit to similar training and oversight

It’s only sensible that the regents should undergo ethics training and legislative review — after all, University faculty must submit to similar training and oversight regarding conflicts of interest. The proposals are simply an extension of that high ethical standard to those with most decision-making power. The regents should not have unlimited authority over everything that happens at the University of Texas, certainly, but neither should the Legislature or the University administration. All three entities should cooperate under a system of checks and balances to improve higher education in the state of Texas. SB 15 and the Joint Oversight Committee are commendable steps in that direction.

GALLERY



Top ten shuts out out-of-state students

Eric Nikolaides
Daily Texan Columnist

The Top Ten Percent Law, which was passed in its original form in 1997, guarantees automatic admission to any state-funded university to all Texas high school students graduating in the top 7-8 percent of their class. It was designed to increase minority enrollment in Texas universities as a “back door” approach to affirmative action — a circuit court ruling in 1996 had banned the overt use of race as a factor in university admissions — but the rule has had an unintended effect at UT: limiting out-of-state enrollment.

Within just a few years, the Top Ten Percent Law began to dominate university admissions; in 2009, 86 percent of the incoming freshman class were applicants granted automatic admission under the law. And as top ten percenters began to comprise more and more of each entering freshman class, there was less and less room for everyone else. The Texas Legislature did enact a cap, for UT-Austin only, during the spring 2009 legislative session that limited top ten percent applicants to 75 percent of the entering class. But that still left shockingly little room for other qualified applicants — Texans outside of the top ten percent and anyone from out of state. Much has been written in this publication and in many others about Texans excluded by the rule, but for now, let’s focus on students — like myself — from outside of Texas.

In these hard economic times, this University has a vested interest in attracting as many out-of-state students as possible. The reason is simple: We pay more in tuition. As the coffers start to run dry and universities begin to do what they can to cut costs — such as privatizing staff and cutting unpopular degree programs — the additional revenue that out-of-state students bring in is invaluable. And it’s obvious that other public universities across the country are hearing this message loud and clear. As the Chronicle of Higher Education has reported, public universities in states like Oregon, Arizona, South Carolina and Louisiana are focusing on attracting out-of-state students for the extra cash flow that nonresident tuition dollars can provide.

Texas is very much unlike those states. But across the nation, many institutions similar to UT in terms of size and influence attract and enroll significantly more out-of-state students. For example, in 2010 (the most recent year for which data is readily available), out-of-state students accounted for 15.7 percent of the entering freshman class at Ohio State University, 36.1 percent at Penn State University and 37.8 percent at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. UT, on the other hand, had an entering freshman class that was just 8.3 percent out-of-state.

But it isn’t just about money. Only by attracting the best and brightest students from around the nation (and not just from Texas, although the pickings are pretty good here) can UT become the elite public university that we all want it to be. Senator Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, the chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee, echoes this sentiment. “I believe the University has an interest in attracting well-qualified students from all over the place. Diversity of all kinds is important,” he told me. As it stands, UT is lagging far behind its public university rivals in attracting top-quality students from around the nation, and the Top Ten Percent Law is largely to blame. This is something that needs to change.

Seliger, who has opposed the Top Ten Percent Law in the past, was quick to point out that the policy has been successful in increasing minority enrollment. “It has increased diversity to an extent,” he explained, “but not to the extent that would justify dictating 75 to 100 percent of all admissions to the University. And so that’s the subject upon which the debate revolves.” He admitted that many universities would probably not care to see the complete repeal of the policy and that there is a substantial public interest in minority admissions to the University. While this is certainly true, the extent to which Top Ten Percent has prevented UT from dictating its own admissions policies and attracting top students is unacceptable.

Currently, there are plans in both the Texas House and Senate to revise the policy and account for whatever the U.S. Supreme Court might rule in *Fisher v. University of Texas* this spring, since a decision in Fisher’s favor would, under existing law, dismantle the entire non-top-ten admissions process. When lawmakers take up this issue once again, they should take into account the University’s vested interest in attracting talented out-of-state students as well as in-state ones.

Nikolaides is a Spanish and government senior from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Service should be more than self-serving

Natalie San Luis
Daily Texan Columnist

In 2011, I was invited to join Orange Jackets, one of UT’s most prestigious women’s service organizations. Later, I learned that my membership was contingent on my ability to pay several hundred dollars in dues over the next two years. I knew service required sacrifice, but that year I forked over more cash in the name of volunteerism than I did for textbooks. This was particularly troubling considering that some of our “service to the University” consisted of distributing nametags to guests of President Powers’ pregame get-togethers.

Eventually I found that the majority of the budget was dedicated to special events for members: socials, catered initiation and induction ceremonies, tailgates. When I tried to initiate democratic budget reforms, I was met with silence. I revoked my membership in the organization, but had I stayed, I would have been kicked out anyway because I couldn’t pay up.

My situation is not unique. Most students in service organizations pay dues that go to printing T-shirts or a winter formal fund. But I consider service to be a method of creating change. Communities are not underserved or underprivileged by coincidence, but rather by dominant ideologies that rely on that hierarchy. For me, service that doesn’t include some sort of re-examination of privilege is disconcerting.

Without question, any service organizations and service-oriented individuals, including those in Orange Jackets, do incredible work in our community. For example, Taylor Mauze is the logistics chair of Project 2013, UT’s annual day of service, and has been communicating with individuals in underserved areas of the Austin community all year to coordinate service projects. “Every year, we do what the community requests of us,” Mauze said. “We’ll do anything that is requested that is within our power to do.”

However, such a passion for community is not always present in calls to serve. The discussions about community service frequently revolve around the advantages for individual doing it: Volunteering is a

Disadvantaged communities can certainly benefit from a Saturday afternoon of service. But too often it is used as an excuse to avoid examining one’s own privilege.

great experience. Volunteering looks great on a scholarship application. Volunteering is so rewarding.

But if we walk away from soup kitchens, park clean-ups and clothing drives with a renewed sense of satisfaction with our culture, our lifestyles and ourselves, we are doing a disservice to our communities.

In America, self-absorption is not only tolerated — it’s glorified. That mindset isn’t cured by community service; it bleeds over onto it. Disadvantaged communities can certainly benefit from a Saturday afternoon of service. But too often it is used as an excuse to avoid examining one’s own privilege.

I don’t intend to dissuade anyone from serving their communities. Rather, I encourage students to serve thoughtfully. If you raise money to help a cancer patient pay for treatment, think about why access to health care is denied to some. If you clean up a park in an East Austin neighborhood, ask yourself why West Campus looks better than Dove Springs.

Too often, community service events or organizations are considered ends in themselves. And when that service falls under criticism — when those who serve are forced to question their own advantages — the inherent contradiction within the idea of self-serving service arises.

This Saturday, over 2,000 students will gather at various locations throughout Austin for the University’s largest day of service, Project 2013. I hope they approach the event with Mauze’s mindset: “Serving reminds you of what a privilege it is to be here and all the opportunities that we have access to. It’s much easier to reflect on those if you get outside the insular community of UT.”

San Luis is a Plan II, English and women’s and gender studies senior from Buda.

STATE

Protest contends worker deaths

By Victor Hernandez-Jayme

Through a street-theater performance, UT students raised awareness of how Texas is one of the most dangerous states to build in. Construction-related deaths represent 20 percent of all work-related deaths and 84 people died the last year on record, 2011, according to the Texas Department of Insurance's website.

Representing injured construction workers by lying on the floor of the West Mall, UT students, volunteers at the Workers Defense Project, aimed to show support for the families of injured and deceased construction workers.

"These issues go unaddressed, people don't talk about them. Texas is also the only state that is not required to pay workers' compensation for injuries," history junior Lorena Rios Treviño said.

Students organized the protest to show support for new legislation that would provide statewide workers' compensation. The Workers Defense Project will host a march to the state Capitol on Feb. 27 that will include speeches by legislators and family members of injured or deceased workers.

"In Texas, employers have the right to withhold workers' compensation. There's this lack of communication in which the workers are not told that if injured, they're on their own. That is why we are having our March on Feb. 27th. Legislative action would hold employers to be more accountable for their actions," anthropology senior Allan Garcia said.

Construction worker's safety is also facing new challenges, because of the



Pearce Murphy | Daily Texan Staff

Anthropology junior Alan Garcia and history senior Lorena Rios hold signs to demonstrate their support for an upcoming march organized by the Workers Defense Project on Wednesday afternoon.

rapid growth of the industry in Texas.

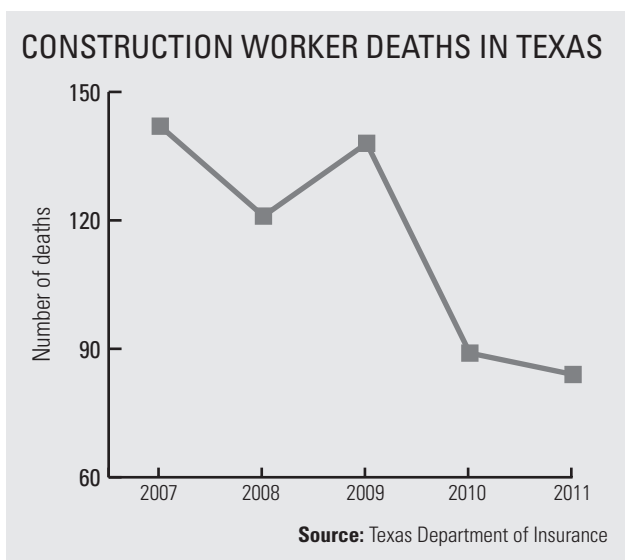
"Austin, Dallas and San Antonio are among the 10 fastest growing cities in the nation and this rapid growth has allowed permissive safety standards to be implemented in the sake of profit," Rios said.

Rios explained that one of the reasons workers operate in unsafe conditions is because they are a vulnerable group, mostly immigrants, who work with the fear of being fired or deported.

"Most of the workers are not insured, they are immigrant workers. Their work is being sold out to sub-contractors. At the end of the day the big constructions firms that are hiring them are not responsible for the workers, because they sub-contract," Rios said.

Garcia said he wants statewide protection for construction workers in contrast to local city-mandated laws.

"Just last summer we held the vigil for a worker who



died building bridges on 290 and 183, and he died of heat exhaustion," Garcia said. "Although the City of Austin has an ordinance protecting workers, since he was working on a state site, there was no safety measurements put in place that could have prevented his death."

Garcia said construction

worker issues are relevant to students.

"As students we are all used to construction, we are used to new housing being built, we are used to walking around campus and seeing workers around us every day; but I think there is a need to be more interaction between us, more solidarity."

LEGACY

Former Dean of Information dies

By Lexie Dubinsky

Glynn Harmon, former dean and professor at the School of Information for more than 40 years, died Sunday at the age of 79.

Harmon earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of California, Berkeley and a doctorate at Case Western Reserve University. He was considered by many colleagues to be the founding father of the information discipline. Harmon earned the Texas Excellence in Teaching Award and the Excellence in Advising Award. For two years, Harmon served as a graduate adviser and received the Top Advisor Award at UT.

Sam Burns, web content strategist at the School of Information, said Harmon will be greatly missed.

"He was nearly a constant presence in our buildings in the evenings and at night and was always happy to chat about the field, his life or my life," Burns said. "I will never forget going to the first Conference and witnessing the reception



Glynn Harmon
1933-2013

he got from his longtime colleagues and peers."

Andrew Dillon, dean and professor at the School of Information, said Harmon dedicated his life to UT and the School of Information.

"I know he was proud of what we achieved and hope that he will be duly recognized in the years ahead for his vision," Dillon said. "On a personal note, he was the warmest, most supportive colleague imaginable who helped generations of students succeed both in their times here at UT and later in their lives. He was a truly remarkable man."

RGV *continues from page 3*

consolidated institution. The System will also seek \$10 million per year in state funds to assist the consolidation. Those appropriations would be separate from the Permanent University Fund.

Oliveira said the Permanent University Fund is projected to grow over the course of the decade, which will provide more

money to each university included in the fund and negate any impact the new institution would have on how much other universities receive.

"We're not going to be crowding [other universities] out," Oliveira said. "We're going to be part of the family, which we should have been a long time ago."



Deadline To Submit: March 15

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FOOTBALL

Horns back to the gridiron

By Rachel Thompson

For most, springtime means bright flowers, warmer weather and the occasional rainy days.

For the Texas football team, spring means hours spent on the field running drills, as-simulating with teammates and preparing for autumn. The blood, sweat and tears commence Thursday, the first official day of spring practice.

Head coach Mack Brown said the team has been pounding away in the weight room in preparation for spring practice, arriving at 6 a.m. four days a week and staying until 7:30 p.m.

“Kids were laughing, cutting up, picking at each other,” he said at a press conference following signing day. “If one guy is slacking a little bit, they’re really getting after each other. There’s more accountability out there that you need to pick it up.”

Picking it up is exactly what fans are longing to see. After a mediocre 9-4 season that followed last year’s 8-5 record and 2010’s bleak 5-7 season, the stakes are high for 2013.

And rightly so. Texas has



Lawrence Peart | Daily Texan file photo

Rising junior quarterback David Ash gets ready to pass against Oregon State at the Alamo Bowl last December. Ash enters spring practice as the solidified expected starter for the Longhorns but head coach Mack Brown insists that all jobs are open.

19 returning starters, the most of any team in the country, in addition to a talented offensive line. While the sheer number of returners could mean little playing time for Texas’ new freshman, Brown made clear the best players will be chosen as starters.

“All of our jobs are always open,” Brown said. “Very honestly, we’re going to play the best players.”

The start of spring practice means the first time several of the new recruits will lace up their cleats and hit the field with their team members.

SPRING continues on page 7

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL | TEXAS 93, KANSAS 83

Fussell leads Texas, dominates Jayhawks

By Matt Warden

The Texas Longhorns tallied their most points in a game all season, defeating the Kansas Jayhawks, 93-83. The win snapped Texas’ four-game losing streak and avenged the 38-point loss it suffered Jan. 23 in Lawrence.

“The thing that I thought they did, they didn’t get down after Sunday and realized we did some great things,” head coach Karen Aston said. “We had a great few days of practice, but I don’t know where these points came from.”

From the opening tip the Longhorns’ energy couldn’t be contained as they connected on their first 10 shots, jumping out to a 20-10 lead. Chassidy Fussell was the

catalyst, hitting her first three shots before finishing the first half with 16 points on 7-for-8 shooting.

“Everybody got involved offensively, which is a terrific thing for us, because teams have been keying in on certain players and not guarding others,” Aston said. “I think that is attributed to the players getting into the gym and taking that personally. They’ve done a really good job.”

Texas (10-15, 3-11) played in sync in the first half, moving the ball with ease on its way to shooting 76 percent to Kansas’ 40.6 percent. In addition to Fussell’s strong start, Nneka Enemkpali racked up 11 points on 3-for-3 shooting to fuel the Longhorns’ 47-35 halftime lead.

“We talked about opening



Jonathan Garza | Daily Texan Staff

Junior Chassidy Fussell goes for a layup against Kansas on Wednesday night. Fussell scored a team-high 26 points in the Longhorns’ 93-83 victory.

up the game with high energy and we really wanted to go out there and attack them before they could attack us,” Enemkpali said. “I think we did a good job.”

KANSAS continues on page 7

“Everybody got involved offensively, which is a terrific thing for us, because teams have been keying in on certain players and not others.”

—Karen Aston, head coach

SOFTBALL | NO. 6 TEXAS 5, HBU 0

Senior Taylor Hoagland rounds the bases after launching a ball over the left-field fence. The solo homer in the bottom of the third was her third on the season. She tied the school record for career runs.



Lawrence Peart
Daily Texan Staff

Longhorns blank Huskies

By Evan Berkowitz

Kim Bruins recorded her third shutout of the season as the No. 6 Longhorns defeated Houston Baptist 5-0 for wins 12 in as many tries. This is the second-longest winning streak to open the season since the 2003 squad, led by recent Texas Sports Hall of Fame inductee Cat Osterman.

Bruins, who went the full seven while allowing seven hits and striking out seven, now has recorded 19 consecutive scoreless innings,

the longest in her career, and is looking like the clear number two in the circle behind Blaire Luna.

“I am feeling pretty good,” Bruins said. “I’ve been working really hard this past year. I’m trying to focus on hitting my sports and letting my defense work for me.”

The Longhorns (12-0) opened the scoring in the first as Taylor Hoagland and Brejae Washington each singled, stole a base and scored on defensive miscues. Hoagland scored on an error as the Huskies tried to get Washington out on a bunt

single. Washington came around and scored on an illegal pitch.

Then in the third, after whiffing on a change-up earlier in the at-bat, Hoagland crushed another one off a blue Volvo in the left field parking lot for her third home run on the year.

“It’s just a Volvo, it will be OK,” Hoagland joked about after the game. “I recognized the change-up and missed it the first time and was looking for that pitch again. I got on top of it and drove it.”

BRUINS continues on page 7

Bruins remains perfect, gets third straight shutout

GAME BREAKDOWN

Innings 1-3: After Kim Bruins struck out two batters and another fouled out, Texas quickly found its way to the plate in the first inning. Hoagland and Washington both stole bases en route to the Longhorn’s first scores of the evening. The second inning saw little action as the Longhorns preserved their two-run lead. To start the bottom half of the third, Hoagland sent a changeup out left field. Bruins added an RBI to bring Washington in to extend the lead to four.

Innings 4-7: Bruins struck out two more in the fourth as she continued her dominance in the circle. Freshman Big 12 hitting leader Stephanie Ceo scored on a wild pitch in the fourth to cap off the scoring before three scoreless innings. Bruins and Sarah Shotton both dominated in the circle through the last three innings as both teams saw little offense. The Longhorns won the game 5-0 and are now 12-0 while the Huskies are 4-1 after suffering their first loss of the season.

BY THE NUMBERS

2: Illegal pitches by Houston Baptist starter. Keeley Shuler committed both the infractions which led to a Texas run.

10: Hoagland’s stolen base count this year as she added another one Wednesday night. She is the team’s leader in stolen bases on the season, two ahead of Washington and three ahead of Taylor Thom.

19: Bruins’ consecutive scoreless innings to start the season. This is the longest consecutive scoreless streak in her career. Bruins has appeared in three games this season.

34: Team stolen bases for the season, as Washington (8/8 for the season), Hoagland and freshman Taylor King out-smarted the Houston Baptist infield Wednesday.

.577: Batting average for freshman Stephanie Ceo as she leads the Big 12. Washington also boasts an average of .500 while Hoagland boasts a .441 average.

—Jori Epstein

SIDELINE

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SPORTS BRIEFLY

Johnson injured, awake after coma

Former Longhorn forward Gary Johnson was in a medically induced coma following a collision during an Israel Basketball Association Game on Tuesday.

Johndre Jefferson, a former USC basketball player, was on the other end of the collision. He tweeted that, while chasing down a loose ball, he “accidentally elbowed [Johnson] in the forehead,” which “cracked his skull” and put him “in critical condition.”

Wednesday afternoon, Johnson texted Texas associate athletic trainer Eric Fry that he will “be fine.”

Johnson averaged 11.5 points and 6.8 rebounds as a senior for Texas two seasons ago, when the Longhorns fell in the NCAA Tournament Round of 32.

—Christian Corona

Luna named to CLASS watch list

Senior pitcher Blaire Luna was one of 30 softball student athletes named as a candidate for the Senior CLASS Award Wednesday afternoon. Luna was chosen for her contributions to Texas both on and off the field. The selection committee considers four different areas when making decisions — character, competition, classroom and community.

As a junior, Luna was named to the Academic All-Big 12 First Team and has been a member of the Big 12 Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll the last three years. On the field, Luna is a three-time All-American and has accumulated many other accolades, including All-Big 12 team selections and Big 12 Pitcher of the Year in 2010.

—Sara Beth Purdy

MEN'S TENNIS PREVIEW | NITYA DURAN

The Longhorns resume play Thursday as they host the University of Texas at Arlington and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi at the Penick-Allison Tennis Center. This will be the first time the Longhorns have played since back-to-back losses at USC and Pepperdine at the beginning of February in California. Texas started the season on a promising note, going 4-0. Since then, it has lost three

straight matches. The Longhorns have won 17 consecutive home openers going into Thursday's double-header. Texas is ranked No. 15 on the ITA rankings. UTA (1-2) and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi (1-4) aren't in the ITA Top 25 national rankings. The Longhorns' No. 39 Soren Hess-Olesen is 8-5 overall with a 2-3 record in singles this year. He was named ITA Texas Region Player to Watch

after last season. No. 17 doubles tandem Chris Camillone/David Holiner and No. 50 Daniel Whitehead/Sudanwa Sitaran have only played a combined total of two matches throughout the dual match season. However, Holiner has been partnered with Whitehead lately. They're 4-2 this season, while Camillone has been paired with freshman Nick Naumann.



Soren Hess-Olesen
Sophomore

SPRING

continues from page 6

The new Longhorns who have started spring classes include defensive end Jake Raulerson, quarterback Tyrone Swoops, outside linebacker Deoundrei Davis and junior college transfer Geoff Swaim, a tight end.

This year also marks the first offseason with Major Applewhite as co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. Applewhite, who was thrust into duty just before the Alamo Bowl, now has a bit more time on his hands to lay out an effective offense for the upcoming season.

"We want to be similar to the things we've been doing, but we want to do it with no huddle and with the same players," Brown said of his offensive strategy. "You still want to be physical, and some people aren't. I think that's what's getting them beat. We're going to keep our physical presence."

Applewhite returns to practice after an alleged affair with a student during the 2009 Fiesta Bowl week surfaced. Brown said at his press conference that he didn't consider firing Applewhite after the story came out.

Thursday also marks the first practice for Case McCoy and Jordan Hicks after their suspensions following



We're seeing more leadership than we have the last two years ... I think it's going to be a great next year.

— Mack Brown,
head football coach

accusations of sexual assault the day before the Alamo Bowl (no charges were filed). Brown said in a statement that the players would be disciplined for breaking team rules, and they rejoined the team shortly after.

Springtime means work time for quarterback David Ash, who will return a little more seasoned after making strides as last year's starter. The junior struggled at times, but a fourth-quarter performance during the Alamo Bowl inspired hope that maybe this next year will belong to Ash.

In the midst of the sprints, drills and strength training, Brown said the team is growing in ways other than physically. They're becoming leaders.

"We're seeing more leadership than we have the last two years," Brown said. "I think it's going to be great next year."

KANSAS

continues from page 6

Three days after scoring 27 points in her team's loss to Texas Tech, Fussell found herself in another rhythm, scoring 26 points on 10-12 shooting from the field, including 4-5 from three-point range. Despite going down from an elbow early in the second half, Fussell returned and showcased leadership on the court.

"Getting Chas back on

track the last few games has really made a difference," Aston said. "Shooters are like that. Seeing the ball when it starts going in, they think they can make anything. She was definitely in a terrific groove tonight."

While the Longhorns revealed just how great they can be when they control the tempo and knock down their shots, their usually

stout post game continued to shine, led by Imani McGee-Stafford's 18 points and 13 rebounds.

Kansas did its best to claw its way back into the game at the end, hitting two threes in the final minute to cut the lead to 88-83 with 49.3 seconds left. But Texas' shooters refused to let another close game slip away as McGee-Stafford put her team up by

nine before Brady Sanders iced the win with less than 30 seconds to play.

"Everybody came in and did something great," McGee-Stafford said. "It's a team confidence builder, not just individual."

The Longhorns posted a 64.6 field goal percentage, their highest total all year.

"They're growing up right in front of us," Aston said.

Longhorns put up season-best numbers in victory

GAME BREAKDOWN

First Half: The Longhorns came out of the gate on fire. They went 10-for-10 within the first six minutes to take a 20-12 lead before they missed their first shot. Chassidy Fussell led her team with 16 points in the first half as Texas shot a season-high 76 percent from the floor in just one half. On the other side of the court the Longhorns played solid defense putting pressure on the ball, holding the Jayhawks to just 40.6 percent shooting from the floor. At the 3:26 mark Fussell hit a three-pointer which brought the Texas score to 40, two above the total amount of points the Longhorns had the last time they played Kansas.

Second Half: While Kansas got out to a hot start with two quick scores, the Longhorns were able to respond with a 7-0 run of their own forcing a Jayhawk timeout. Texas once again used pressure to draw fouls against its opponent which gave it a few extra scoring chances. At the 13:48 mark the Longhorns gained a brief 20-point advantage, their biggest lead in conference play this season. The Jayhawks gave Texas some trouble towards the end of the game as they got to within six points of the Longhorns with just 1:14 left. With Kansas fouling to try and get the ball back, the Longhorns were able to make their free throws and capture the 93-83 victory.

STOCK UP

Chassidy Fussell: The junior led her team with 26 points on the night. She made 10 of 12 shots, including four of five three-pointers, making all the points Texas had from behind the arc. Midway through the second half she left the game after taking an elbow to the head but came back to end the game.

BY THE NUMBERS

17: It took Texas less than 17 minutes to grab as many points as it had the last time it played Kansas, a 76-38 loss. A three-pointer by Fussell propelled the Longhorns past that score at the 3:26 mark.

64.6: Texas finished the game with a season-high 64.6 shooting percentage. The team went 31-of-48 while making 4-of-8 three-point attempts. On the other end of the court the Longhorns held the Jayhawks to a 44.3 shot percentage.

WHAT'S NEXT

The Longhorns now look to Saturday where they will face off once again with the top-ranked team in the nation. They travel to Waco to play Baylor (25-1, 14-0) for an afternoon game. The last time the two teams met was earlier this month when the Bears visited Austin and took the win, 75-48.

—Garrett Callahan



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By DAVID
OUELLET

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P	S	E	C	V	L	C	L	D	N	H	L	T	M	R
P	T	D	Y	E	I	L	I	N	I	E	A	E	U	
E	E	C	U	A	S	N	E	W	C	E	G	E	S	T
D	E	K	A	O	S	T	E	D	D	U	T	H	S	X
R	O	V	A	L	F	O	E	G	E	N	M	W	Y	E
Y	P	S	I	R	C	A	W	R	A	P	A	I	M	T
M	R	C	F	S	H	S	A	I	S	R	P	S	N	S
A	E	O	T	U	I	T	T	M	N	H	I	O	R	U
D	R	A	V	G	L	E	E	I	E	E	I	C	H	R
K	E	I	L	A	I	D	R	N	V	N	N	R	E	C
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WEST CAMPUS

WXWC showcases bands, films

By Alexandra Hart

Deep in the heart of West Campus, a network of housing cooperatives lend themselves to affordable, social student living, as well as notoriously wild parties. This weekend, six of these co-ops — 21st Street, French House, Marjorie-Daw, Eden House, Seneca Falls and New Guild — will house the fourth annual West By West Campus Festival.

For the past three years, independent music festival West by West Campus has drawn crowds to multiple co-op houses in west campus to see up-and-coming local talent. The 2013 event has expanded to include an extra day with a new film festival component, as well as growing pains as WXWC continues to become more popular.

“It gets harder to organize every year because more and more people are finding out about it,” WXWC co-founder Tessa Hunt said. “The space can’t get bigger, and if we moved it it wouldn’t be the same. That’s sort of the magic of it, it happens here on this block where all these awesome, insane houses are.”

Hunt said WXWC has grown massively since its debut in 2010, what she called “the Goldilocks year” of the festival, when planning was easy and the budget was smaller.

“Back then we didn’t have the structure that we have now,” co-founder Rob Camp said. “We now have a system of volunteers with uniforms. We’ve had to figure out how to organize the volunteers and figure out their roles. It’s gone from a three-week preparation, to this year where it took about four months.”

Waldo Wittenmyer, who also helped create the festival, agreed that organization



Mikaela Locklear | Daily Texan Staff

The organizers of West by West Campus met Tuesday night to discuss the events of this upcoming weekend. The West by West Campus festival begins Friday with a film festival. The music festival will end Saturday Feb. 23.

is a key factor as the event grows each year. Planning the event has become more and more detailed, requiring equipment rentals, portable toilets and permits.

“The thing is having enough organization to justify doing this, and having the city be OK with what we’re doing,” Wittenmyer said. “There’s no way they would just let us do this if we aren’t going to be really organized about what we’re doing.”

This year, WXWC will debut a new film festival along

with the music portion. Film screenings are set to take place Friday at the Seneca Falls Co-op. The idea was to give student filmmakers an opportunity to showcase their work in a relaxed setting, without having to pay fees associated with larger film festivals.

“Speaking as an RTF major, we put all this time and money into making films that nobody, besides your professors and your mom, will ever get to see,” film coordinator Sarah Kolb said. “It’s a shame, because so much goes into it.

And even if it’s really good, festival entries are so expensive and that doesn’t fit into a college student’s budget. So I figured, what better way to celebrate really talented film students? It’s completely free submissions, absolutely nothing to lose.”

Despite all of the planning, there remains an element of uncertainty before the event for those in charge, as so many factors go into the success of WXWC.

“This is the scariest thing I’ve done in my entire life, I’m not

gonna lie,” Hunt said. “It’s really exciting too, but some idiot could fall off of a balcony or someone could somehow get hurt and there are just so many things that could potentially go wrong. We spent a lot of time biting our nails. And we’re still pretty much a DIY, ‘damn the man, crash the party’ sort of project, but you can only take

that so far before it’s not fun.”

Kolb agreed, likening it to a childhood holiday.

“It’s like that feeling right before Christmas, when you’re so anxious and you can’t eat and can’t sleep, and it’s all you can think about,” she said. “Then you wake up that next morning and it’s the most exciting, relieving thing ever.”

WXWC 2013 TOP PICKS

Film Festival: 8 p.m. Friday; Seneca Falls and New Guild

Growl: 4 p.m. at 21st Street

Milezo + the Noize: 5:30 p.m. at 21st Street

Q-AND-A

Slam poets deliberate broad aspects of writing

By Audrey White

Andrea Gibson and Anis Mojgani are internationally acclaimed poets who publish books with Write Bloody Publishing, a poetry press based here in Austin. The pair will perform in the Joynes Reading Room on campus Thursday at 7 p.m. Tickets for the reading are no longer available. They each shared some thoughts on poetry with The Daily Texan.

The Daily Texan: How do you draw your inspiration for the elaborate, fanciful metaphors you use to tell stories with your poems?

Anis Mojgani: Poetry is an opportunity to allow oneself to create in a very different manner. There is a logic and a reason and a science and a math to poetry, but it also allows for that logic and reasoning and science to exist in a different realm than the one we live in. I say a snake is a knife, a snake is a knife. I can choose to explain that, but I don’t have to. In a lot of the work I do, I invite the reader to put down whatever they might have with them and enter into something that perhaps might be different.

DT: What advice do you have for college students who want to pursue writing?

Mojgani: There’s always a place for someone’s writing. Even if you don’t get to make a living as a writer (as a person who does that, I’m very thankful for that), that shouldn’t be the guiding factor to why one writes. It shouldn’t be ‘I create art in order to get it known.’ One makes art to answer something that speaks up

inside of oneself. It’s a tricky balance. Ultimately, one shouldn’t make art for that reason, but if one is serious about one’s art, they should be sharing.

DT: What do you like about campus shows, and how are college readings different than doing a slam or a regular public reading?

Andrea Gibson: I love performing on college campuses. I love how present and excited students tend to be. I love the energy and passion and I appreciate how open students are to having their hearts and minds changed. That said, college shows can be different than other readings in that the audiences are generally less rowdy ... and I love rowdy!

DT: How do your roles as poet and activist overlap? How has your poetry made an impact in the conversation about LGBTQ equality and the struggles of the queer community?

Gibson: Art and activism began overlapping for me about 12 years ago when I started working with Vox Feminista, a performance group of radical political activists based in Colorado. Vox’s motto is, “To comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.” I’ve sort of adopted that as my own guide for living and writing for the past decade. As to how my poetry makes an impact in the LGBTQ community, I don’t think I can answer that. My hope is that it has helped people feel less alone.

ANIS MOJGANI AND ANDREA GIBSON

Where: Joynes Reading Room

When: Feb. 21 at 7 p.m.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Meteor landing ignites need for detection

SCIENCE SCENE
By Robert Starr

This past week, a 55-foot-wide meteor flew over the city of Chelyabinsk, Russia, leaving a trail of smoke in the Siberian skies and producing a shock wave powerful enough to shatter windows and injure hundreds of people. Anyone with access to YouTube can see recordings of the event and the images are awe-inspiring, terrifying and nothing compared to what they could have been if this wasn’t a bite-sized meteor.

Just over 100 years ago, another explosion in the sky — the Tunguska event (also in Siberia, coincidentally) — destroyed all of the trees in an area roughly two and a half times the size of Austin. The consensus viewpoint is that a meteor broke apart in the atmosphere, releasing 1,000 times the energy of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Again, though, the Tunguska meteor, even at estimates of six times the size of Chelyabinsk’s, was a minor blip in the radar.

Discussions of meteor impacts, for scientists, conjure up images of the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event from 65 million years ago, caused by a six-mile-wide asteroid (and, possibly, massive volcanic activity). Even though the asteroid was nowhere near the largest out there (which is over 600 miles wide), it was enough to remove approximately 75 percent of all living species from the earth, including all of the non-avian dinosaurs, and severely dwindle the populations of the survivors.

An event of this magnitude



Illustration by Ploy Buraparat | Daily Texan Staff

is extremely rare, occurring once in 100 million years, but there’s still the more realistic possibility of a smaller rock causing substantial damage in a populated area. We saw what the Tunguska meteor did to a forest — imagine what it could have done to a major city.

There are scientists in charge of monitoring potential meteors (called asteroids until they enter the earth’s atmosphere) and in the aftermath of the recent Chelyabinsk incident, they’ve received more funding, which is long overdue, because as of right now, we are woefully unprepared.

NASA estimates that we’ve catalogued no more than 10 percent of the asteroids large enough to devastate our planet. Unless we devote more resources to detection, our next major impact will most likely come as a complete surprise, just as the event in Chelyabinsk did, but possibly with more than a few scary YouTube videos to show for it.

Even if we did see an asteroid coming towards us,

however, we don’t currently have a clear method of stopping it. We do have some clever ideas, however. One involves painting a side of the would-be-killer white, causing light from the sun to bounce off of the asteroid instead of heating it. The light’s momentum should, given enough time, move the asteroid out of our path. A similar idea involves using the gravity of a man-made spaceship to gently nudge the object away.

And, of course, there’s the more exciting notion of nuking the damn thing, as the heroes of the 1998 movie “Armageddon” did. Though very cinematic, the destructive route may not be ideal. It’s difficult to control explosions, by their very nature, and there’s no guarantee that a part of the asteroid won’t hit us and still cause considerable damage. This method would

probably only be used on the largest of asteroids, like the one seen in Armageddon, or as a last-ditch effort for the smaller ones.

As of right now, though, we can’t implement any of these methods without knowing about the asteroid long before its impact. Due to the limited number of asteroids we’ve catalogued, we probably won’t.

While preventing a large meteor impact is not as immediate a concern as reversing global warming, there’s a similar potential for harm: survivors of the actual strike would still need to contend with the climate altering after-effects. Hopefully the videos from Chelyabinsk provided enough of a motivation to push us into action, because right now there’s a giant rock, drifting somewhere out there in space, that has our name on it.



Love the science scene video:
bit.ly/dt_meteors



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